

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 8, 2014

Fact Sheet: Celebrating Careers and Contributions of the Federal Science and Technology Workforce

Today in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the U.S. Office of Personal Management (OPM) and the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP) convened more than 50 Federal employees, scientists, researchers, engineers, technologists, and innovators from across agencies to celebrate the key role of STEM employees who serve in our Government.

Every day, the Federal science and technology (S&T) workforce conducts research, performs analysis, and administers and carries out programs that help grow our Nation's economy, boost national security, and protect public health, safety, and our environment. These innovators are skilled professionals in areas as diverse as supercomputing, climate science, ecosystem conservation, robotics, and public health. Through their work, they seek answers to urgent science and technology questions, help ensure that innovative solutions and technologies are rapidly prototyped and brought to market, and collectively contribute to keeping our nation on the cutting edge.

To achieve the wide-ranging missions of Federal agencies, the Obama Administration has emphasized the importance of maintaining a dynamic, diverse, high-caliber Federal S&T workforce with multi-disciplinary skills and the necessary professional, technical, and policy expertise to:

- Inform and support responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources in government-funded research and procurement programs;
- Manage and lead large, dynamic, and complex research and engineering organizations that both perform and fund research and development activities;
- Conduct in-house scientific and engineering research at Federal laboratories and other institutions;
- Develop Federal policies and regulations based on accurate technical and scientific information; and
- Perform operational activities at the state, local, and Federal levels.

In 2012, President Obama directed Federal agencies to close the skills gap for mission critical occupations, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Of the more than two million employees working today in the Federal Government, approximately 12.5% make up today's Federal STEM workforceⁱ.

The Obama Administration has long recognized that diversity is one of our Nation's greatest assets and, as such, we must work to build a Federal STEM workforce that reflects the true diversity of America – this is an essential step toward achieving our national goals. Much progress has been made to boost the diversity of our STEM workforce, but more work must be done.

At today's Celebrating Careers and Contributions of our Federal Science and Technology Workforce event, senior Administration officials highlighted a host of new and ongoing efforts to attract,

retrain, train, and mentor world-class, diverse STEM professionals to serve and stay in our Government. These efforts include:

Building tools and data products to help hiring managers. Today, teams of entrepreneurs, data analysts and technical staff at OPM demonstrated prototypes of five data-driven products currently under development which will help hiring managers better target, recruit, and retain STEM-job applicants as well as help better track and understand trends and needs in the Federal STEM workforce. These prototype products, which all resulted from a [Data Jam hosted by OPM and OSTP in January 2014](#), are:

- *Hiring Manager's Portal* – a web-based portal that will help hiring managers better identify quality STEM applicants and tailor job announcements to desired skills and qualifications of prospective applicants based on OPM data resources. The portal will be available through OPM to Federal hiring managers to facilitate job/skills linkages.
- *Data Science Ladders* – a central, online resource that will provide employees the opportunity to build S&T skills. OPM is collaborating with other Federal agencies to make this resource available to all Federal employees through an easily accessible online platform.
- *STEM Employee Directory* – an online resource that will allow agency hiring managers to find employees with STEM skills already within the Federal government, along with other Federal employees with extensive S & T skills and experience. OPM is currently developing this tool, which would be made available to hiring managers as well as other interested stakeholders in the Federal community.
- *STEM Data Catalog* – a data community and catalog that will allow interested parties to analyze information related to S&T applicants and better understand the challenges of including these candidates in the Federal workforce. OPM is working to make this and other workforce-data visualization tools available to the Federal community.
- *STEM Applicant Dashboard* – a tool to help hiring managers visualize at what stages they may be losing high-potential STEM-job candidates. This dashboard will empower users with a data-driven tool to answer questions and hone strategies related to STEM applicant pools. OPM is working to provide this tool as an analytical resource for hiring managers.

Recruiting top STEM students and recent graduates. Federal agencies are leveraging a number of programs to compete for top STEM talent through OPM's [Pathways initiative](#), which provides assistance to Federal agencies in their student recruiting efforts. By working directly with Federal Human Resources staff to, for instance, help create online assessment questionnaires or produce referral lists, Pathways helps agencies recruit and hire interns and recent graduates. Pathways encompasses three specific programs dedicated to Internships, Recent Graduates, and Presidential Management Fellows (PMF). Each of these is a way for students and recent graduates of every age and community to get started in the Federal Government.

- [The Internship Program](#) promotes opportunities for current students starting in high school through graduate school to work in agencies and explore Federal careers. Students who successfully complete the program will be eligible to become a Federal employee with a permanent job in the civil service.
- [The Recent Graduate Program](#) allows students with a post-secondary education degree to be placed in a 1-year developmental program with the potential of a career within the Federal Government. Mentorship and training opportunities are provided throughout the program.

- [PMF-STEM](#). The Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program is OPM's flagship leadership development program. In 2012, President Obama directed Federal agencies to close the skills gap for mission critical occupations, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Beginning with the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Class of 2014, the PMF Program piloted a STEM track to address this skills gap. The PMF STEM track will help identify and train future STEM leaders for the Federal Government. This pilot is ongoing and will continue for the Class of 2015.

Attracting and retaining Federal STEM employees. In order to ensure that agencies have the needed flexibility to hire enough well-qualified STEM employees, and that once in government, these employees are retained, OPM has put into place:

- [Senior level \(SL\) and scientific \(ST\) positions](#). This streamlined process will enable agencies to quickly obtain allocations (spaces) for multiple positions that are similar in description. It will also provide for the delegation of authority to allow agencies to better manage across their SL/ST allocations.
- [Critical Position Pay](#). OPM has put tools into place to educate agencies and assist them in establishing higher pay rates to attract and retain highly-qualified and specialized employees whose skills are critical to accomplishing agency missions.
- [STEM mentoring](#). In an effort to both enrich the Federal STEM workforce and inspire the next generation to pursue STEM studies and careers, the Administration continues to encourage STEM mentoring among the Federal STEM workforce. For instance, in 2013, a number of Federal agencies including OPM came together to host an interagency Open House on STEM and Mentoring. At the event, officials from across the Administration met with leaders of STEM mentoring organizations to discuss ways to engage students in hands-on learning opportunities across STEM-related fields.
- [University partnerships](#). OPM has launched a partnership with the University of Maryland's University College (UMUC) to provide discounted tuition to all civilian Federal employees and their legal dependents for undergraduate and most graduate degrees. UMUC's programs are available online to employees throughout the country and around the globe. This partnership serves as an important recruitment and retention tool for mission critical occupations such as the STEM professions. The partnership enables Federal subject matter experts to work with UMUC to shape curricula, in order to assure course content is relevant for the emerging needs of the Federal science and technology agencies.

OSTP and OPM are committed to continuing to work together, with departments and agencies across the Federal Government, and with the broader stakeholder community to examine the current needs and opportunities facing the Federal STEM Workforce. These skilled professionals are serving their country every day, and will continue to be critical to ensuring the health, prosperity, and security of our Nation.

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ⁱ U.S. Office of Personnel Management. "FedScope: Employment Cubes June 2014"
<http://www.fedscope.opm.gov/employment.asp>. 2014